

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 THESSA 00526 021701Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 021440Z SEPT 75

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2429

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: KARAMANLIS IN NORTHERN GREECE

1. IF POPULARITY CAN BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF COLUMN INCHES OF PRESS COVERAGE, CONSTANTINE KARAMANLIS RIVALS STJM DEMETRIOS AS MOST POPULAR MAN IN NORTHERN GREECE. COVERAGE OF HIS VISITS TO DRAMA FOR CLOSE OF PTOLEMEOS MILITARY EXERCISES AUGUST 29 AND FOR OPENING THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FAIR (TIF) AUGUST 30 PRE-EMPTED FIRST PAGES OF ALL THREE THESSALONIKI PAPERS OVER WEEKEND. AT DRAMA AND AT DINNER FOR FAIR INAUGURATION PRIME MINISTER MADE IMPORTANT SPEECHES ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THEMES WHICH EMBASSY ATHENS IS REPORTING.

2. PRESS COVERAGE, HOWEVER, ACCURATELY REFLECTED ENTHUSIASM GENERATED BY KARAMANLIS VISIT HERE AS OBSERVED BY CONGEN OFFICERS. BEST TEST, PERHAPS, WAS PACKED CAPACITY CROWD OF APPROXIMATELY 10,000 AT PALAIS DES SPORTS FOR FAIR INAUGURAL, WHICH WAS ABLE TO SUSTAIN ITS ENTHUSIASM DURING 45-MINUTE WAIT IN SWELTERING HEAT FOR PRIME MINISTER'S ARRIVAL. WHEN PM FINALLY APPEARED, THESSALONIKI METROPOLITAN PANTELEIMON WAS FORCED AT LAST TO BEGIN TRADITIONAL BLESSING (AGIASMOS)

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PAGE 02 THESSA 00526 021701Z

UNHEARD IN DEAFENING PROLONGED CLAMOR OF THRONG,  
DESPITE KARAMANLIS' PERSONAL EFFORTS RESTORE QUIET.  
MERE REFERENCES TO KARAMANLIS NAME IN WELCOMING SPEECHES  
BY TIF PRESIDENT VELIDES AND MINISTERS OF NORTHERN  
GREECE AND COMMERCE PRODUCED FRESH OUTBURSTS FROM  
AUDIENCE. NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER VELIDES, LONG TIME  
POLITICAL CRITIC OF PM, OUTDID HIMSELF IN PANEGYRIC,  
WHICH BEGAN ON NOTE THAT LAST YEAR KARAMANLIS HAD COME  
TO THESSALONIKI AS A LIBERATOR AND THIS YEAR AS A  
CREATOR, TO CROWD'S CLAMOROUS APPROVAL.

3. THRONGS MASSED ON TIF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OUTSIDE  
PALAIS WERE SO DENSE THAT OFFICIALS ATTENDING CEREMONY,  
INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE CABINET MEMBER OBSERVED (MINISTERS  
OF AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, LABOR AND MERCHANT  
MARINE ATTENDED, PLUS UNDERSECS LAMBRIAS AND ACHILLEOS  
KARAMANLIS), WERE UNABLE BOARD CARS AND DEPART AREA FOR  
FORTY FIVE MINUTES. LIGHT-HEARTED, EXUBERANT AIR COMPLEMENTED  
BY SCENE OF THIRTY-NINE GREEK NAVY SHIPS FROM PTOLEMEOS EXERCISE,  
INCLUDING ELEVEN DESTROYERS AND SIX SUBMARINES, RIDING AT  
ANCHOR IN THESSALONIKI HARBOR, "HAPPY LIGHTS" BLAZING,  
AS FIREWORKS BURST OVERHEAD. MOB SCENE REPEATED AT  
MAKEDONIA PALACE HOTEL "RECEPTION", WHICH FOLLOWED  
FORMAL DINNER AND KARAMANLIS SPEECH ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S  
ECONOMIC PLANS.

4. AFTER NIGHT SPENT AT FORMER KING'S PALACE RESIDENCE  
OF NORTHERN GREEK MINISTER, KARAMANLIS, ACCOMPANIED BY  
"C" CORPS COMMANDER KRITIKOS AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS  
DIRECTOR MOLYVIATIS, HELICOPTERED TO KARYES AND IVIRON  
MONASTERY ON MT. ATHOS, THENCE TO LARGE PORTO CARRAS  
TOURIST PROJECT ABUILDING ON ADJACENT SITHONIA PENINSULA.  
SUPPOSEDLY PRIVATE VISIT GIVEN BROAD COVERAGE THIS  
MORNING (SEPT 2) BY ACCOMPANYING REPORTER AND  
PHOTOGRAPHER FROM "ELLINIKOS VORRAS", WITH LEAD FRONT  
PAGE ARTICLES AND LARGE PHOTO OF SPORT-SHIRTED, SMILING  
PM RELAXING WITH HOSTS AND GUESTS.

5. ONLY SOUR REACTION WE HAVE HEARD WAS FROM SEASONED NEWSMAN  
AT TIF INAUGURATION WHO REMARKED TO BPAO THAT PAPADOPOULOS  
HAD RECEIVED SAME RECEPTION TWO YEARS PREVIOUSLY.  
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PAGE 03 THESSA 00526 021701Z

WHATEVER NEWSMAN'S PROBLEM MAY BE, HOWEVER, THIS WAS  
BY ALL ODDS MOST SPONTANEOUS AND ENTHUSIASTIC OF THE  
FIVE SUCH MANIFESTATIONS I HAVE ATTENDED.  
BRENNAN

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